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11. (Amended) A system for coding audio signals in a sound system having a plurality of sound channels for providing M sets of audio signals from input signals, wherein M is a positive integer greater than 2, and wherein a plurality of intra-channel signal redundancy removal devices are used to reduce the audio signals for providing first signals indicative of the reduced audio signals, said system comprising:

a first means, responsive to the first signals, for converting the first signals to audio data of integers for providing second signals indicative of the audio data; and

a second means, responsive to the second signals, for reducing inter-channel signal redundancy in the second signals for providing third signals indicative of the reduced second signals, wherein the second signals are divided into a plurality of scale factor bands and the third signals are divided into a plurality of corresponding scale factor bands, and wherein coding efficiency in the second signals in a scale factor band is representable by a first value and coding efficiency in the third signals in the corresponding scale factor band is representable by a second value, said system further comprising a comparison means, responsive to the second and third signals, for bypassing the inter-channel signal redundancy reduction in said scale band factor by the second means when the first value is greater or equal to the second value.

REMARKS

In the patent application, claims 1-17 are pending. In the Office Action, claims 1-8, 10 and 12-17 are rejected, and claims 9 and 11 are objected to but would be allowed if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant has amended claim 9 and 11 to put them in condition for allowance. No new matter has been introduced.

At section 2, the drawings are objected to. The Examiner states that Figure 2 should be designated by a legend such as "Prior Art".

It is respectfully submitted that Figure 2 is obtained from a co-pending application Serial No. 09/612,207, which is assigned to the same assignee of the present invention (p.1, lines 5-7; p.6, lines 16-21). At the time of filing the instant application, Figure 2 had not been published